

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 LENDING 00216 101450Z

62

ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 AGR-05

COME-00 /032 W

----- 005351

R 101327Z FEB 76

FM AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1966

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L L E N I N G R A D 0 2 1 6

EO 11652GDS

TAGS: ETRN, EGEN, UR

SUBJ: TOUR OF PORT OF VENTSPILS, LATVIA (CER5-59504)

REF: STATE 015518

1. CONGEN OFFICERS VISITED VENTSPILS, LATVIA, FEBRUARY 4-6 AND ARRANGED VISIT TO VENTSPILS PORT MORNING OF FEBRUARY 5. FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS REPORTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH INFORMATION DESIRED REFTEL.

2. CONGEN OFFICERS WERE RECEIVED BY PORT DIRECTOR AND SENIOR ENGINEER WHO GAVE SHORT, GENERAL BRIEFING ON PORT OPERATIONS AND THEN CONDUCTED

CONGEN OFFICERS ON BRIEF TOUR OF PORT. GENERAL IMPRESSION OF PORT IS ONE OF RATHER DILAPIDATED BUILDINGS/WAREHOUSES, BUT LAYOUT APPEARS GENERALLY EFFICIENT. FREIGHT HANDLING AND OTHER EQUIPMENT INCLUDES WEST GERMAN AND OTHER CRANES (TOTAL OF 33) AND ASSORTED OTHER WEST GERMAN AND JAPANESE PORT MACHINERY. PORT DIRECTOR PROUDLY MENTIONED THAT TWO OLD AMERICAN CRANES, INSTALLED IN EARLY 1940'S, WERE STILL IN USE.

3. PORT PRESENTLY HANDLES APPROXIMATELY TWO AND ONE HALF MILLION TONS OF DRY FREIGHT ANNUALLY PLUS SOME EIGHTEEN MILLION TONS OF OIL THROUGH THE ADJACENT TRANSSHIPMENT POINT OF THE "FRIENDSHIP" PIPELINE (REPORTED SEPTTEL). PORT HAS RECENTLY AVERAGED ANNUAL SHIPMENT OF APPROXIMATELY 60,000 TONS OF FREIGHT TO UNITED STATES, PRIMARILY
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 LENDING 00216 101450Z

CHEMICAL FERTILIZER INGREDIENTS AND SUCH ITEMS AS PEAT MOSS. PORT

DIRECTOR SAID THAT ONLY FOUR OR SIX AMERICAN VESSELS CALLED AT VENTSPILS DURING 1975, BUT ASSORTED US GOODS WERE DELIVERED IN FOREIGN FLAG BOTTOMS, INCLUDING SOME GRAIN. DIRECTOR HAS HEARD THAT HE CAN EXPECT INCREASED ARRIVAL OF AMERICAN BOTTOMS CARRYING GRAIN IN MARCH /APRIL PERIOD. GRAIN IS OFFLOADED ENTIRELY BY BUCKET CRANES AND PORT UTILIZES NO RPT NO VACUATORS. GRAIN SHIPS ARE UNLOADED DIRECTLY INTO RAILCARS WITH RAIL LINES PARALLEL TO CRANES. CONGEN OFFICERS SAW ONLY BOX CARS AND NO GRAIN HOPPER CARS DURING PORT VISIT, BUT PORT OFFICIAL SAID LATTER ARE AVAILABLE. IT DOES NOT APPEAR THAT VENTSPILS PORT HAS BEEN UTILIZING ANY FUMIGATION PROCEDURES UP TO NOW. PORT OFFICIALS WERE VAGUE ON THIS POINT.

4. PORT DIRECTOR SAID THAT PORT TAKES APPROXIMATELY FOUR DAYS TO UNLOAD GRAIN VESSEL OF APPROXIMATELY 26,000 TONS CAPACITY. IT APPEARS THAT PORT HAS NOT RPT NOT BEEN FACED AS YET WITH CONGESTION PROBLEM DUE TO RELATIVELY SMALL NUMBER OF GRAIN VESSELS HANDLED THUS FAR. HOWEVER, GENERAL IMPRESSION OF PORT FACILITIES INDICATES THAT CONGESTION COULD BECOME PROBLEM IF A NUMBER OF GRAIN VESSELS ARRIVED AT VENTSPILS OVER RELATIVELY SHORT PERIOD. DIRECTOR SAID IT WAS POSSIBLE TO DIVERT INCOMING CARGO TO RIGA PORT, BUT VENTSPILS BETTER SUITED FOR UNLOADING GRAIN DUE TO WIDER RAIL FACILITIES IN IMMEDIATE UNLOADING AREA.

5. DIVERSION OF VESSELS TO PORT OF KLAIPEDA, LITHUANIA, APPEARS TO BE SUBJECT TO NATURE OF SEAPORT THERE. PORT DIRECTOR SAID THAT KLAIPEDA'S

PORT WAS SUBJECT TO WATER LEVEL FLUCTUATION AND TURBULENCE IN VIEW OF PORT'S RELATIVELY UNPROTECTED POSITION VIS-A-VIS OPEN SEAS OF BALTIC. VENTSPILS, ON THE OTHER HAND, WAS WELL-BUFFERED AND HIGH WINDS

AND STORMS DID NOT SERIOUSLY AFFECT RECEIPT AND HANDLING OF INBOUND VESSELS.

6. VENTSPILS PORT EMPLOYS TWO AND ONE-HALF THOUSAND PERSONS, BUT DIRECTOR OF PORT (LIKE OTHER INDUSTRIAL INSTALLATIONS IN VENTSPILS) SAID OPERATIONS WERE DISTINCTLY HAMPERED BY LABOR SHORTAGE. THE PORT UTILIZES A TWO-SHIFT SYSTEM. PORT MUST COMPETE WITH EXISTING OIL TRANSSHIPMENT POINT AS WELL AS LARGE CHEMICAL COMPLEX NOW UNDER CONSTRUCTION IN OBTAINING SUFFICIENT WORKERS FROM VENTSPILS' TOTAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 LENDING 00216 101450Z

POPULATION OF 48,000.

7. PORT DIRECTOR NOTED THAT HE HAD BEEN TOLD IN 1970 THAT VENTSPILS COULD EXPECT TO RECEIVE CONSIDERABLE NEW PORT EQUIPMENT/MACHINERY FROM THE UNITED STATES, AND PORT OFFICIALS BEGAN TO PLAN ON THIS BASIS. HOWEVER, DIRECTOR RUEFULLY OBSERVED THAT FATE OF TRADE BILL HAD PREVENTED THIS PLANNED ACQUISITION OF AMERICAN EQUIPMENT WHICH, HE OBSERVED, IS VERY, VERY GOOD. PORT HAD THEREFORE CONFINED

ITS FOREIGN EQUIPMENT PURCHASES TO FRG AND JAPAN WHERE THERE WERE
"MANY INTERESTED SELLERS."

8. U RELATED TO GRAIN, BUT OF POSSIBLE INTEREST, IS THE FACT THAT
VENTSPILS IS A MAJOR SHIPPING POINT FOR SOVIET MADE AUTOMOBILES.
RAILCAR AUTO CARRIERS WERE LOADED WITH SOVIET ZHIGULIS (LADA)
AWAITING TRANSPORT TO WESTERN EUROPE. MOST OF THE AUTOMOBILES EX-
PORTED THROUGH VENTSPILS ARE BOUND FOR BELGIUM AND THE
NETHERLANDS.
NEUBERT

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION, SHIP MOVEMENTS, CARGO SHIPS, GRAINS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 FEB 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976LENING00216
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760051-0341
From: LENINGRAD
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760264/aaaacekv.tel
Line Count: 125
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EB
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 STATE 15518
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <06 MAY 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <31 AUG 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TOUR OF PORT OF VENTSPILS, LATVIA (CER5-59504)
TAGS: ETRN, EGEN, UR
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006